The Confusion Between **Whose** and **Who’s**

**Definition:** The confusion between **whose** and **who’s** belongs to the general category of **possessive pronouns** vs. **contractions.** According to *The Chicago Manual of Style* (2010), “[t]he possessive forms of personal pronouns are my, mine, our, ours, your, *yours . . . whos*e. . . . None of them takes an apostrophe” (217). The apostrophe in “who’s” indicates **contraction** (of “who is”), not **possession.**

**Grade Level:** Grade 9 Applied, Academic and Workplace

**Rationale:** Mistakes like this need to be caught as early as possible, so that students can practise the correct forms and leave school with a command of common rules of grammar and punctuation.

**Activity:**

**1.** Each student makes a “bidding paddle” which he or she can hold up to “vote” for an answer. The paddle will be made of a popsicle stick and two circles of paper, and will look like this:

The word “whose” will be written on one side of the paddle, and the word “who” on the other.

**2.** The teacher will prepare a list of sentences which include *whose* or *who’s.* A student volunteer will read the sentences (see second page), and the class will vote for the version they would use in that sentence.

3. After each vote, the teacher will tell the students which word won, and which word is correct. A Student who got the right answer will explain his or her choice to the class.

**Resources:**

*The Chicago Manual of Style,* 16th ed. (2010). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

**Common Errors and Corrections:**

Error: *Whose* coming with us today? Correction: Who’s (contraction of who is)

Error: Does anyone know *who’s* book this is? Correction: whose (possessive pronoun)

**Exercise:**

Choose the correct word (**who’s** or **whose**) to fill in the blanks. Ask yourself whether the word is short for “who is” or whether it shows possession.

1. The dog toy rolled under the sofa is digging at the carpet.  
  
2. If we all go away this weekend, going to look after the pets?  
  
3. book is on the table?  
  
4. I like the back-up singer voice is really powerful. band is she singing with now?   
  
5. If you stay out late tonight, going to drive you home?

6. If you stay out late tonight, parents will drive you home?

7. You never know project will win the contest.

8. You never know going to win the contest.  
  
  
9. If I lend you my iPod, going to entertain me?

10. iPod did you borrow?